

# Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project

Salt Lake County Council Update



- Agenda
  - Mill Creek Canyon Project Considerations
  - ✓ Project Partners and Funding
  - ✓ Project Purpose and Need
  - ✓ Activities to Date
  - ✓ Public Input
  - ✓ Design Update
  - ✓ Environmental Update
  - ✓ Schedule
  - ✓ Next steps



### Agenda

### Project Partners

- Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD)
- Salt Lake County
- Millcreek
- US Forest Service (USFS), Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest



## FHWA Federal Lands Access Program

- Improve transportation facilities on or adjacent to federal lands
- Emphasis on high-use federal recreation sites
- Supplements state and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities
- Federal and local match: costs are split between federal and local project partners

### **Project Partners and the Federal Lands Access Program**

### Present Project Considerations

- Infrastructure focused project
- Operations and maintenance are not changing
- USFS will reissue easement to County for entire roadway
- Future projects are not being precluded
- Future Project Considerations
  - Lower canyon improvements and FLAP funding Application submitted November 2024



### **Present Project and Future Project Considerations**

- Purpose
  - Enhance access for motorists and recreationists using upper Mill Creek Canyon Road

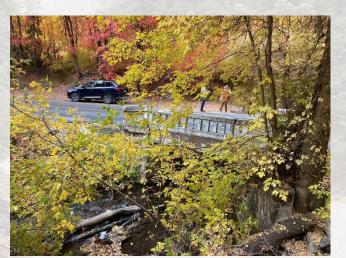
### Needs to Address

- Deteriorating road condition
- Variable road width
- Lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Informal roadside parking that causes safety concerns



### **Purpose & Need / Project Location**

- Preliminary Design
- NEPA
- Agency meetings and coordination
- Public Meetings
  - Three public open houses [11/21, 5/22, 6/23 (virtual and in person)]
- Cabin Association coordination
- Central Wasatch Commission
- Mayoral Update







### Activities to Date

- Major comment themes include the following:
  - Minimize roadway width to minimize environmental resource impacts
  - Include a bicycle lane to the top
  - Parking area improvements, more parking, and less parking
  - Transit
  - Travel speed
  - Firs Cabin leaseholder access
  - Level of environmental review



#### What Have We Heard

- Proposed Improvements
  - Roadway improvements
  - Parking area improvements
  - Bridge, culvert, and drainage improvements
  - Other improvements
    - Striping and signing
    - Trail connections
    - Sight distance improvements
    - Communications conduit

### **Design Considerations**

- ✓ Does it meet the purpose and need?
- Does it minimize environmental impacts?
- Does it enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety?
- ✓ Does it improve driver expectation?
- ✓ Does it preclude future options?
- ✓ Can it be built?
- ✓ How much does it cost?

### **Proposed Improvements**

- Three proposed roadway
  widths:
  - Winter Gate to Elbow Fork,
    24 feet wide
  - Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead
    - 20 feet wide
  - At three constrained locations
    18 feet wide

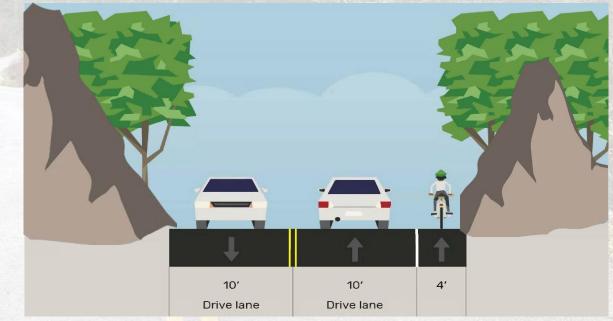


### **Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements Overview**

# Existing

- 1.4 miles long
- Width varies from 16 to 24 feet
- Proposed
  - 24-foot-wide roadway
    - Two 10-foot travel lanes
    - One 4-foot bicycle lane on the uphill side
  - Curve modifications





### Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Winter Gate to Elbow Fork

# Existing

- 3.2 miles long
- Width varies from 13 to 20 feet

# Proposed

- 20-foot-wide roadway
  - Two 10-foot travel lanes
- Curve modifications
- Minimizes impacts in the narrower upper canyon





### Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead

# Existing

 Sensitive resources are located near the roadway, such as Firs Cabins, Thousand Springs (beaver pond), stone bridge #1

# Proposed

- 18-foot-wide roadway
- Two 9-foot travel lanes
- A narrower road results in fewer impacts to the natural environment





Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Constrained Locations

- Why Alter Parking Areas?
  - Improved circulation and access
  - Easier maintenance
  - Staging for emergency response
  - Safety
  - Accommodate future potential transit use
  - Formalized parking reduces environmental impacts, such as erosion and social trails

### Which parking areas are affected?

- Maple Grove Picnic Area (Winter Gate)
- White Bridge Picnic Area
- Elbow Fork Trailhead
- Alexander Basin Trailhead
- Upper Big Water Trailhead
- Informal Parking Areas



### **Proposed Improvements: Parking Area Improvements**

- White Bridge replacement
  - Historic feature, mitigation developed in coordination with USFS and SHPO
  - New bridge railing being designed to match the existing railing
- Culverts
- Water Quality Features
  - Detention basins
  - Swales
  - Curb and Gutter
  - Ditches







Proposed Improvements: Bridge, Culvert, and Drainage Improvements

- Other Associated Features and Improvements
  - Striping and signing
  - Crosswalks
  - Pedestrian and bicyclist specific signage
  - Trail connections
  - Sight distance improvements
  - Conduit for future communication
  - Speed limit and other operations unchanged



### **Proposed Improvements: Associated Improvements**

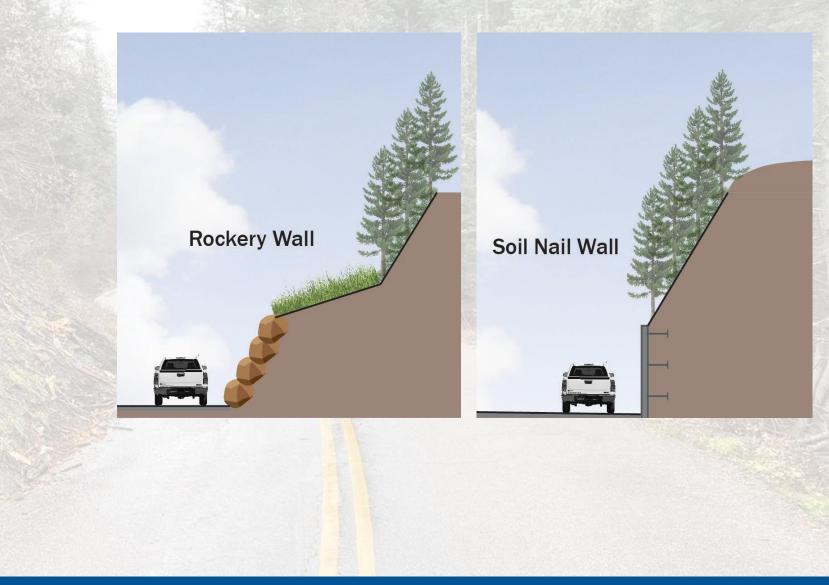
### Retaining Walls

### **Rockery Walls**

Located in improved Big Water Trailhead and new Alexander Basin Trailhead parking areas

#### **Soil Nail Walls**

3 locations in upper canyon (approximately 700 linear feet total, 10-15 ft. high – concrete will be colored/textured to reduce visual impacts



### **Proposed Improvements: Retaining Walls**

### Environmental Assessment (EA)

- In response to public input, FHWA-CFLHD prepared an EA
- The EA describes the proposed action and present environmental consequences of the preliminary design
- Public had an opportunity to review the EA before any decision is made on the project
- FHWA-CFLHD prepared its decision document after the EA public review period
- Comment response included in the decision documet

### **Criteria for Consideration**

- Beneficial and adverse effects
- Concerns with public health or safety
- Impacts to sensitive resources, such as federally listed species, wetlands, and historic properties
- Individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts
- Public concerns related to environmental issues

### **NEPA Class of Action: Environmental Assessment**

- Air Quality
- Archeology
- Architectural History -
- Aquatic Resources
- Biological Resources
- Environmental Justice
- Floodplains
- Land use

- Noise
- Paleontology
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Water quality
- Section 4(f)
- Section 6(f)
- Visual
- Roadless areas

### **Resource reports include:**

- Aquatic Resources Delineation Report
- Archeological Resources Report
- Architectural Resources Report
- Cultural Resources Report (for public)
- Biological Resources Report (for public)
- Other Resources Report (for public), which includes aquatic resources, land use, visual resources, recreation and access

### **EA Resource Topics**

## NEPA

 Both the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division and the **USDA Forest Service Salt Lake** Ranger District, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) FHWA CFL - May 14, 2024 US Forest Service – July 31, 2024

# Design and Construction Schedule

- Summer 2024, Final Design
- Fall 2024, Advertise and Awarded Construction Contract
- Spring 2025 (May 1<sup>st</sup>)– Fall 2026, Construction

**NEPA** and Design/Construction Schedule

# **Questions / Answers**

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